



October 12, 2021

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman, House Natural Resources
Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources
Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman and Members of the Committee:

The Coalition for Outdoor Access (COA) urges members of the House Natural Resources Committee to vote in favor of the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act, H.R. 3670 ["SOAR Act"] when it is marked up by the committee on October 13, 2021. The SOAR Act will increase recreational opportunities and improve recreation management on federal lands and waters and provide vital support to the outdoor recreation economy.

COA is a broad alliance of businesses and organizations with first-hand knowledge of the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal land management agencies. The Coalition came together in 2014 to improve the operation of these systems for the benefit of the agencies, the recreational landscapes they support, the organizations who provide facilitated recreational experiences on federal lands and waters, and for the members of the public who use these services. Our members include for-profit and nonprofit outfitters and guides, university recreation programs, volunteer-based clubs, and the conservation advocacy community. The COA Steering Committee includes representatives from the following organizations:

- [American Mountain Guides Association](#)
- [Angler's Covey](#)
- [Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education](#)
- [The Mountaineers](#)
- [National Outdoor Leadership School](#)
- [REI](#)
- [YMCA](#)
- [The Wilderness Society](#)

The Coalition supports the SOAR Act because it will enable more people to get outdoors, improve recreation management, and bolster the outdoor recreation economy. If enacted, the bill will:

- **Increase recreational access** by making much-needed changes to the outfitter-guide permitting systems of the federal agencies to enable more people to experience the outdoors with the help of an outfitter, guide or other outdoor leader. Among other things, these changes would:
 - **Increase flexibility for outfitters, guides and other outdoor leaders** by allowing them to offer activities that are substantially similar to the activity specified in their permit.
 - **Maximize existing recreation opportunities** by extending the term of temporary outfitter-guide permits and creating a program for sharing unused service days.
 - **Simplify the permitting process for guided trips involving multiple agencies** by authorizing the agencies to issue a single multijurisdictional permit.

- **Improve recreation management** by increasing the availability of federal recreation passes and by directing the agencies to evaluate land managers based on the achievement of recreation and tourism goals.
- **Expand recreation opportunities** by encouraging the agencies to extend seasonal recreation opportunities and promoting outdoor recreation and outdoor employment for veterans of the Armed Forces.
- **Improve recreational trail conditions** by establishing an interagency trail management plan and promoting volunteer stewardship to address maintenance needs.

Of particular note, the recreation permitting provisions in Title 1 of the SOAR Act are supported by more than 100 recreation businesses and organizations across the United States (list on page 3).

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support the SOAR Act at markup and favorably report the bill to the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

The Coalition for Outdoor Access Steering Committee:

Jeannette Stawski, Committee Chair
Executive Director
Assoc. of Outdoor Recreation and Education
Ann Arbor, MI

Jonathan Williams
Public Policy Manager
National Outdoor Leadership School
Lander, WY

Betsy Robblee
Conservation and Advocacy Director
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Seattle, WA

Matt Wade
Deputy Director
American Mountain Guides Association
Boulder, CO

Courtney Aber
National Director
YMCA BOLD and GOLD
Seattle, WA

Jeremy Oyen
Manager, National Field Operations
REI
Kent, WA

David Leinweber
Chairman, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation
Alliance
Owner, Angler's Covey Inc.
Colorado Springs, CO

Paul Sanford
National Director of Recreation Policy
The Wilderness Society
Washington, DC

Title 1 of the SOAR Act has been endorsed by a broad coalition of recreation organizations:

Adventures 60 North
Aerie Backcountry Medicine
Alaska Alpine Adventures
Alaska Charters and Adventures
Alaska Guide Collective
Alaska Rivers Company
Alaska Sea Kayakers
Alaska Wildland Adventures
All Alaska Outdoors Lodge
Alpenglow Expeditions
America Outdoors Association
America Walks
American Alpine Club
American Alpine Institute
American Camp Association
American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Hiking Society
American Horse Council
American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education
American Mountain Guides Association
American Sportfishing Association
Angler's Covey
Appalachian Mountain Guides
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Archery Trade Association
Association for Experiential Education
Association of Marina Industries
Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education
Avid4 Adventure
Babkin Charters
Backcountry Bike and Ski
Back Country Horsemen of America
Bear Trail Lodge
Big City Mountaineers
Chicks Climbing and Skiing
Choose Outdoors
Chugach Outdoor Center
Colorado Mountain School
Colorado Outward Bound School
Colorado River Outfitters Association
Colorado Wilderness Corporate and Teams
Colorado Wilderness Rides and Guides
Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions
Dude Ranchers Association
Estes Park Rock Climbing
Exposure Alaska/MICA Guides
Exum Mountain Guides
Grand Canyon River Outfitters Association
Holiday River Expeditions
Idaho Mountain Guides
Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association
Montana Outfitters and Guides Association
Montana Wilderness School
Mountain Skills Rock Guides
Mountain Trip
Nantahala Outdoor Center
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds
National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Outdoor Leadership School
National Shooting Sports Foundation
New Mexico Council of Guides and Outfitters
New Mexico Wild
New River Mountain Guides
New Wave Adventures
No Barriers USA
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Onward and Upward
Open Lands Consulting LLC
Oregon Outfitters and Guides Association
Outdoor Alliance
Outdoors Alliance for Kids
Outdoor Industry Association
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Outdoor Research
Outward Bound USA
Pangea Adventures
Peak Mountain Guides
Red River Adventures
REI
Rising Tide Associates
RV Dealers Association
RV industry Association
San Juan Mountain Guides
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Santa Fe Climbing Center
Sawtooth Mountain Guides
Seneca Rocks Climbing School
Seward Tours and Sunny Cove Kayaking
Sierra Mountain Center
Sierra Mountain Guides
Sierra Mountaineering International
Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Sitka Sound Ocean Adventures
Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
Specialty Equipment Marketing Association
Suntoucher Mountain Guides
The Ascending Path
The Mountaineers
The Mountain Guides
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wilderness Society

International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
Kayak Adventures Worldwide
Kennicott Wilderness Guides
Kent Mountain Adventure Center
Krog's Kamp on the Kenai River
Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce
Lazy Otter Adventures
Los Alamos Mountaineers
Mazamas
McCarthy River Tours and Outfitters
Middle Fork Outfitters Association
Moab Desert Adventures
Montana Alpine Guides
Montana Mountaineering Association

Transforming Youth Outdoors
UnCruise Adventures
Utah Guides and Outfitters Association
Vetta Mountain Guides
Washington Trails Association
West Virginia Professional River Outfitters
Western River Expeditions
Western Spirit Cycling
Wilderness Education Association
Worldwide Outfitters and Guides Association
Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association
YMCA of Greater Seattle
YMCA of Los Angeles
YMCA of the USA